Bonus info:

"This story is inspired by a science fantasy tabletop role-playing game. Setting, aka background, is a near-future, fictional universe, within which cybernetics, magic, and fantasy creatures co-exist, while major corporations, gone tyrannical, fight high & mighty, down & dirty. It combines genres of cyberpunk, urban fantasy, and crime, along with occasional elements of conspiracy, horror, and detective fiction." But respecting copyright & trademark forced me to exclude Shadowrun and Cyberpunk material.

Family Affairs aka My Avenging Vampire.

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Narrated 2025 version:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cdbub49kLfs

"When forced into battle, Fox always fights to kill, not to stun or capture." Recited from Shadowrun –> Shadows of Magic.

Prologue - A Forgotten Dream:

A mageling shrugged off the city's Nu¥en litany,
Convinced that he is ready for our magical family.
*
Despite precautions and his even wiser retreat,
His foul adversaries did not ever miss the beat.
*
One goddess weeps, while another one chuckles,
The Norn's toll still comes, as if by iron knuckles.
*
You showed respect and you paid each former due:
Dear Mage, you won't save three, yet **will** save two!

The story begins:

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to be born!". That pseudo-prophetic warning weighed upon my mood, like a death omen, or banshee cry, while I woke up. Some brain dregs like that formed the sermon of another, hopelessly outdated, yet supposedly holy book. My problem with it was: The woman, whom I had married, was a witch, and my daughter, thereby, could be suspected of being a witch as well. Even by the remnants of scientific education that I care to remember. Suckers.

All she had wanted was to get to that teenage band 'Celtic Soul' concert. Well, we had not forbidden that, just failed to tell her about being OK with it in time. So she did what every good daughter does. Rebelliously, she made use of the personality traits inherited and learned from her parents: The lil bitch sedated us and sneaked off!

"Next time you tranquilize your elders, you might wake up in the cauldron, along with spices, dear." I so wished I could tell her, as, for now, she was still missing. `Now´, after we had finally gathered enough cash and credit, and my wife had decided to proverbially leave running the shadows and the big city life behind.

The technology was lightweight and portable, so we did not miss much and spent our time in an arcology much like those retired rangers often tend to do. Plus: Not half the risks & crimes.

Controlled environment, security, and some comfort. Independence, as we could produce our own food and water. Except for me, nearly all others also knew how to brew alcohol. Not Synthanol, but real, handmade-brew alcohol...

When it all started, back in 2043, I had been another urban neo-shaman. Or better said, I may have once been supposed to become a proper one. Fox was my totemic quintessence, but the criminal underclasses were my environment. There is no great prudence that a high-caliber bullet to my head could not neutralize instantly. We had our problems from the start. Because I guess; Fox knew it, yet decided to leave my choice to me. Even the well-meaning can hurt one brutally, and such was not a new life lesson to me either.

I had made my choice. After ten years of running with Fox, and as a fox, I told my totem that we'd better depart. It was mutual. I did not lose all my magic. I was not killed by some breach of my spirit, either, and not even the separation finished me off. Without Fox, I simply was a proverbial shadow of a man. There was no day in my life that I could be fully awake for more than four hours. That was the price to pay: Lifelong imprisonment on the borderline of dreamy slumber. Like a sedated lunatic. Early on, I hated Fox even more, yet knew it was not his misdeed.

Fox was just one more totemic manifestation, and the fat and bloated man, whom I had become, did not look prudent, nor trickster, at all.

We had done what parents typically do when their beloved child goes missing. We had instantly indebted ourselves and hired a private investigator, who had scored some successes in Wayne, earning a reputation in precisely the city, wherein 'Celtic Soul' were predestined to jump upon the stage. But there is this truism about solutions among street-survivors: "An easy solution is no solution at all!" The bitch named Consequence is not fucked by anyone without dire repercussions to follow. My wife tended to smack me with one of her elbows whenever I was caught babbling such vulgarisms aloud. Sadly:

The sleuth had returned to us with one of those facial expressions one only wants to see in media entertainment, or as a Spanglish "Oh, Retardo!" kind of telenovela parody.

The fact that he visited an arcology at all proved to me that he was professional enough. He delivered a message from my daughter's pseudo-kidnapper. So to say: „Come, jump into my trap, so I can avenge myself, or your offspring will become my vampire pawn, slave eternal.“ Signed: K. Damn.

Insanity has only one limit, and that is certain death. I should have killed K straight the first time he had proven himself a false friend. I did not, because I was brainwashed by the laws of an old, long-gone democracy calling it murder. So, K had risen in power and was eager to put the blame on me once again.

"He'll have you raped and tortured to death!" My wife commented, with the shimmer of divination witchcraft in her eyes.

"Or worse: He forces me to listen to his self-pity-fuck sermon again! I will not abandon our child to his fangs!" I tried to fake a smile and to pretend invulnerability.

K had become the boss of a special gang. A Fanged Keyser Söze Copycat, backed by proudly homosexual, drug-crazed Turkish criminals.

Funded by some corporate media friends of his, for they hoped that K, who happened to be a vampire since 2048, would gift them the dark longevity for free! K had played the patience card. Bluffing about how his rise in power would mean the blood, by which they would soon be created, could be much more potent. Well, it needs a certain denial about what Evil means to trust a vampire anyway, to utter a remark on it. Corpse-lovers and coffin-sleepers are wrong in the head, for sure.

Disease worship also ran rampant in the less established social classes, and it was actually pretty common in most cities. For it was the Undead, who were mostly immune to it, not their mortal admirers, who hoped to get transformed by kissing cheeks.

Hence, I ventured into the big city one more time. I needed neither magic nor scouts to find a K, who wanted to be found. Shortly after midnight, because my fat, older me was out of breath, I had entered the gang-hosting mansion of the vampire. Former friends make fierce enemies. A pearl of mutual wisdom.

K was well prepared. Neither my weapons nor my suicide capsule escaped the vigilance of his guards. I wasn't surprised. So I went into the vampire mansion. Armed with nothing but unstable magic and a father's duty dominating my disregard for personal safety. Once more, like a black sheep coming home to the butcher. Ready to face my self-declared judge. It was much more than I had anticipated. K wanted something that I could not offer. I saw it in his eyes while he made his melodramatic entry, sneaking around my bound daughter, like a ghoul around a passerby who had just died of heart failure.

K believed the brain-crap he was babbling; he did not just play the victim the way other junkies did. With all his nocturnal powers, he was still trapped. He had to blame me, for he failed to accept the accountability for, and the consequence of, his own misdeeds. I couldn't end our friendship, for he had always been faster than I. Didn't he realize that much at least? No, still not.

I ignored K, not that his vampiric powers wouldn't have impressed and intimidated me, but another shock had impacted me much more severely. Sadly, it wasn't God coming to our rescue.

"Kiddo, you should've told me about your boyfriend.", was my resignation comment. But, in truth, my last remaining option had just gone awry. The only ace up my sleeve is undone. Not by K, who sure would have rejoiced, but by life, as teenagers tend to prefer living it. I could save only two, but I could not save three!

K indulged in a personal form of amusement, using his own psychic talents, enhanced by the fact that down here, away from the sun, only one of us would not tire and collapse soon. He had managed to ward his tomb against magic, an accomplishment few dark souls could truly boast about.

"Now you miss that capsule, I guess?" K asked in his triumphant mood. His fangs nearly shining in the semi-darkness.

"Plan B is with Hel: Still, I actually just needed you to be distracted, until the prayer is answered, dear K..." Came my reply.

The last memory I ever had was the shock of realization dawning in my child's eyes, as she sensed witchcraft we had not yet taught her. My daughter was transported home, as I unleashed Hel's Boon, old Norse witchcraft, born in bloody & desperate survival measures. The awakened merely attempting such a spell is torn to shreds within the proverbial moment of his deed. It is a last resort spell or prayer made only for females, originally more Hel than Freya or Frigga invoked by it (Norse goddesses). It saved my daughter and robbed my oldest adversary of his vengeance.

I died, much like the chicken babies thrown into the meat grinders for KFC. I had understood the prophecy, and despite the odds against me I came to rescue her, not blow myself to shreds. Naive father's ignorance, I had not known that my daughter was already pregnant.

THE END

Bonus notes (some readers wanted these added):

- So he indeed did not suffer his grandchild, a witch or warlock, being born, dear readers and listeners.
- The gross discrepancy between the new prologue, two goddesses knowing EXACTLY what will happen and WHAT they share with mortals to "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to be born!", the only remnant of training in divination or fortune telling that this specific mage went through, serves more to make the audience know that the odds are stacked against a triumphant victory by a solitary spell-slinger.
- A goddess would be, as a vague concept in the original Shadowrun rules, like Wintermute compared to a first semester human student of programming in those William Gibson novels. Here, **Neuromancer** by title.
- I had chosen not to extend „show don't tell", which is the #writerslife way of: Name those characters, describe in vivid detail how the eyes of his daughter bulge in horror beyond the already dangerous vampire having her chained, when she realizes that her beloved father chose a final defiance against K. Stuff.
- I never finished the sequel due to lack of sales. Also lack of interest by the author (For me, Shadowrun was LONG ago, I now barely remember those years, as 21 year old me and 53 year old me are a bit different). Would the daughter just pop-up home, save and sound? Or would she wake up in dire pain, for the child in her womb happens to be NOT a female? Stuff.
- Would there have been a „Revenge of the Witches", when the exploitation of YA - Young Adult fiction as taught to authors, back then, would mean I copycat the same mother & daughter finally learn to get along and be happy again... It seemed so mandatory, as nobody thinking differently was paid at all.
- „Revenge of the Witches": Would K. hunt them down, or face witches hellbent on vengeance to drive their `You killed my beloved hubby!´ & `You made my beloved father detonate!´ punchlines home, into readers minds? We will never know.
- The story was actually a last resort dish effort, as my female co-author abandoned the real deal AND informed me about that less than 6 hours before `deadline´.

My special thanks to:

- Julie Hoverson and John Scott Ballentine, the two audio professionals, who made me unafraid of the proverbial long road, when it comes to storytelling & poetry without paying customers. Thanks.
- Neike Taika-Tessaro; Thanks for being ve-vis-voozle, also for having my back, if I deserved it, or not so much. It did teach me a new perspective and attitude. Thanks, Hugs, Kudos, and Thankudos!
- Adam `Capricious´ Cabrera, for narrating 6+ of my stories cost-free & being a years long, friendly contact all the way! Also: This extended edition PDF only got written because of Adam's narration showcasing my mistakes & neglects.

STREET MAGE

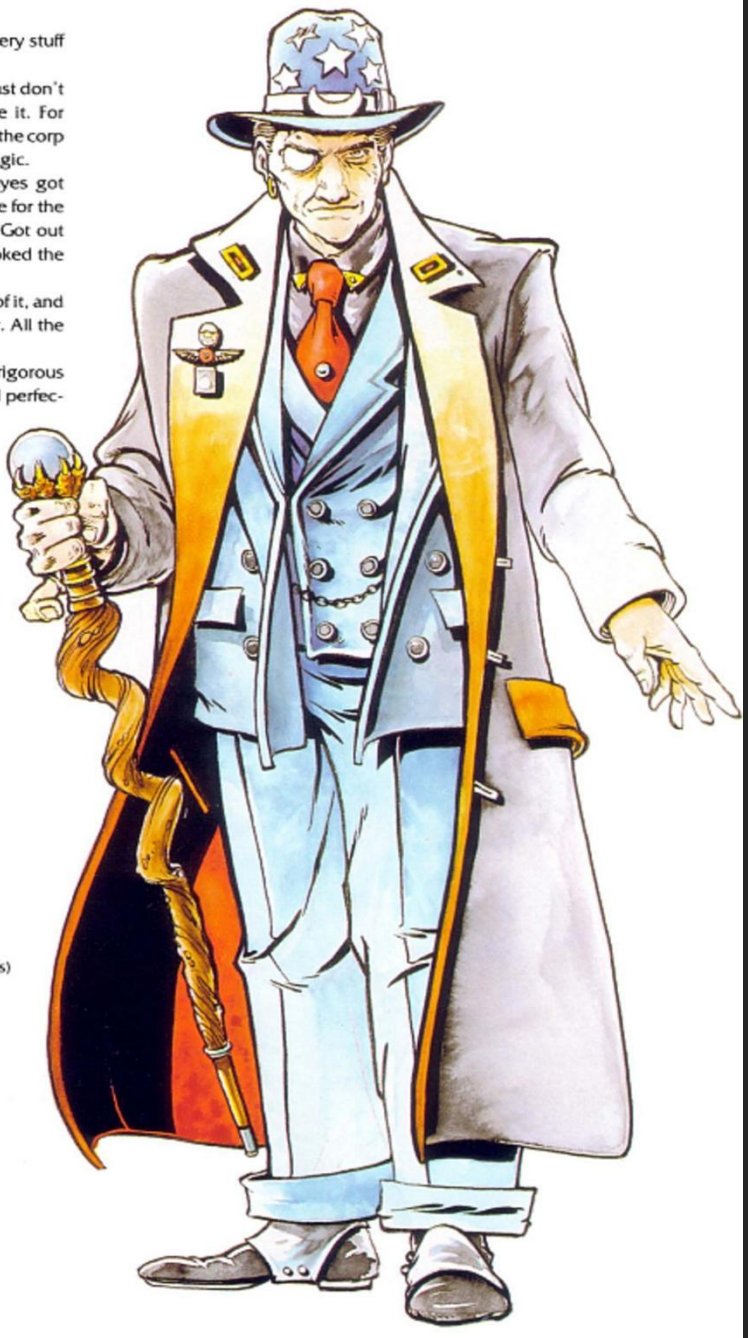
"The streets are where the life is. Life, ya know. The very stuff of magic.

"Those wage mages caught in the corporate rat race just don't understand. You got the power, you take it out and use it. For yourself. For the people. Slotting the clock to turn nuyen for the corp is like selling your body, chummer. You prostitute the magic.

"I tried their way for a while, you know. But my eyes got opened when I saw the suits and the clock like a tombstone for the future. They didn't have anything to teach me, so I flew. Got out where the life is. They shook their wise old heads and invoked the mighty bottom line. What fossil brains!

"Look around you. It's life, you know. We're all a part of it, and it's the real power. I'm going to ride that power, chummer. All the way to the heavens."

Commentary: The street mage has left the path of rigorous magical study, seeking his own path of enlightenment and perfection at street level. He has all the heart, energy, and stubbornness of youth. He knows his way will change the world for the better, even if he must engage in activities that seem to contradict his goals. He is sure that everything will all work out in the end.



Attributes
- Body: 3
- Quickness: 3
- Strength: 2
- Charisma: 3
- Intelligence: 4
- Willpower: 5
- Essence: 6
- Magic: 6
- Reaction: 3

Initiative: 3 + 1D6

Dice Pools
- Combat: 6
- Magic: 6

Cyberware
- None

Contacts
- Choose (2) Contacts

Gear
- Armor Clothing (3/0)
- Ritual Sorcery Materials (4 Points for Detect or Illusion Spells)
- Streetline Special Pistol (with 10 rounds regular ammo)

Skills
- Bike: 2
- Conjuring: 6
- Etiquette (Street): 4
- Firearms: 2
- Magical Theory: 5
- Sorcery: 6
- Stealth: 3
- Unarmed Combat: 2

Spells

Choose one orientation from the following:

Fighter:
- Mana Bolt: 4
- Powerball: 6
- Sleep: 5

Healer:
- Heal 6
- Hibernate: 4
- Treat: 5

Deceiver:
- Chaos: 4
- Confusion: 5
- Entertainment: 3
- Mask: 3

Detector:
- Analyze Device: 4
- Clairvoyance: 3
- Detect Enemies: 3
- Detect Magic: 5

Starting Cash: 10,300¥

STREET SHAMAN

"Others will tell you that only on the land may you find the spirits who guide and nurture. They are sadly wrong. They cling too fervently to the old ways, the old tales. The future calls to all of us, and we must walk new paths to reach it.

"I have found the spirits of the city, and they have power. They lend their power to me, that I can work to see the new paths, that I can walk strong and proud to meet the future.

"Talk to me of your problems. If there is a harmony with my path, I can help you. Those who aid and guide me can be called to your aid. There will be a price, but it shall be a just price suited to what is done as well as your ability to pay."

Commentary: The street shaman walks the path of the spirits. Festooned with fetishes and the implements of his trade, he haunts the metroplex, in tune with its spirit and seeking to preserve its harmony. Unlike the ordinary shaman, he does not abhor the encroachment of technology, although he finds no personal solace in the fruits of the manufactured world. Like all magicians, he avoids all technology which invades the body.

Attributes
- Body: 4
- Quickness: 3
- Strength: 2
- Charisma: 5
- Intelligence: 4
- Willpower: 6
- Essence: 6
- Magic: 6
- Reaction: 3

Initiative: 3 + 1D6

Dice Pools
- Combat: 6
- Magic: 5

Cyberware
- None

Contacts
- Choose (2) Contacts

Gear
- Medicine Lodge Materials (1)
- Medkit
- Ruger Super Warhawk (with 10 rounds regular ammo)

Spells

Choose one orientation from the following:

Fighter:
- Mana Bolt: 4
- Powerball: 6
- Sleep: 5

Healer:
- Heal 6
- Hibernate: 4
- Treat: 5

Deceiver:
- Chaos: 4
- Confusion: 5
- Entertainment: 3
- Mask: 3

Detector:
- Analyze Device: 4
- Clairvoyance: 3
- Detect Enemies: 3
- Detect Magic: 5

Skills
- Conjuring: 5
- Etiquette (Street): 3
- Firearms: 3
- Magical Theory: 5
- Sorcery: 5
- Stealth: 3

Starting Cash: 11,305¥

Note: A street shaman must select an urban totem. See the **Magic** chapter for details.

More from the author & the narrator:

PDF freebies: https://www.calameo.com/accounts/7603697

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